

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

1-16. (Canceled)

17. (New) A swellable hydrogel-forming polymer comprising up to 10% by weight, based on the swellable hydrogel-forming polymer, of at least one hydrophilic polymer having a dendritic structure.

18. (New) The polymer of claim 17 wherein said swellable hydrogel-forming polymer comprises at least 0.005% by weight of the hydrophilic polymer having a dendritic structure.

19. (New) The polymer of claim 17 wherein the hydrophilic polymer having a dendritic structure comprises a polyester formed from a polyol and 2,2-dimethylolpropionic acid.

20. (New) The polymer of claim 17 wherein the hydrophilic polymer having a dendritic structure comprises a polypropyleneimine, a polyamidoamine, or a polyesteramide.

21. (New) The polymer of claim 17 further comprising a powdery additive, a dusty additive, or a mixture thereof.

22. (New) The polymer of claim 21 wherein said additive is a metal salt, a pyrogenic silica, a polysaccharide, a nonionic surfactant, a wax, diatomaceous earth, or a mixture thereof.

23. (New) The polymer of claim 21 wherein said additive is in a form of hollow microspheres from 1 to 1000  $\mu\text{m}$  in diameter and having a wall thickness of 1% to 10% of said diameter.

24. (New) The polymer of claim 17 comprising less than 50 weight ppm of particles less than 10  $\mu\text{m}$  in diameter.

25. (New) The polymer of claim 17 comprising less than 50 weight ppm of particles less than 10  $\mu\text{m}$  in diameter after exposure to mechanical stress.

26. (New) A process for preparing a swellable hydrogel-forming polymer of claim 1 comprising mixing a dried, water-absorbing hydrogel with at least one hydrophilic polymer having a dendritic structure.

27. (New) The process of claim 26 wherein said hydrophilic polymer of dendritic structure comprises a polyester formed from a polyol and 2,2-dimethylolpropionic acid.

28. (New) The process of claim 26 wherein said hydrophilic polymer of dendritic structure comprises a polypropyleneimine, a polyamidoamine, or a polyesteramide.

29. (New) The process of claim 26 wherein said process is performed together with a surface-postcrosslinking operation.

30. (New) The process of claim 29 wherein the surface-postcrosslinking operation is performed using at least one surface postcrosslinker and a solvent comprising a mixture of isopropanol and water.

31. (New) A method of absorbing blood or body fluids comprising contacting the blood or body fluids with a polymer of claim 17.

32. (New) The method of claim 31 wherein the body fluid is urine.

33. (New) A hygiene article comprising a polymer of claim 17.